

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as set forth below:

Please cancel claims 1-14 and add new claims 15-19 set forth below.

1-14. (Canceled)

15. (New) A surfactant in which an N-C<sub>8-24</sub> acylamino acid and an alkali salt of an amino acid are blended and neutralized to have a pH of 5 to 9.

16. (New) A surfactant according to claim 1, wherein an amino acid in the alkali salt of an amino acid is at least one member selected from the group consisting of acidic amino acids and neutral amino acids.

17. (New) A surfactant according to claim 1, wherein an amino acid in the alkali salt of an amino acid is at least one member selected from  $\alpha$ -amino acids.

18. (New) A surfactant according to claim 1, wherein an amino acid in the alkali salt of an amino acid is at least one member selected from the group consisting of glycine, trimethylglycine, alanine, serine, proline, hydroxyproline, glutamine, glutamic acid, asparagine, aspartic acid, and glycylglycine.

19. (New) A surfactant according to claim 1, wherein an amino acid in the alkali salt of an amino acid is at least one member selected from the

group consisting of glycine, trimethylglycine, alanine, serine, glutamic acid, and glycylglycine.